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DEPARTMENT OF STATE 8116090

ACTION MEMORANDUM

'81 MAY 21 S/S

21 MAY 1981

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TO : The Secretary

FROM : CA - Diego C. Asencio

SUBJECT : Personal message from you to President Duarte of El Salvador regarding missing American John Sullivan

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/GIC/MR
REVIEWED BY MAR 15 1984 DATE
RDS for XD-[ ]EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED RELEASABLE
RELEASE DENIED ☐
PA OR FOI EXEMPTIONS

I received a telephone call May 15 from Mrs. John Sullivan, mother of John J. Sullivan, Jr., the American journalist missing in El Salvador since December 28, 1980. Mrs. Sullivan referred to recent media coverage of your telephone call to President Duarte regarding the murdered American churchwomen. The family obviously feels that the Department is not paying as much attention to their missing son as we have the more celebrated cases involving the deaths of the churchwomen, and the two AIFLD representatives. President Duarte is, of course, well aware of the Sullivan case. We see no harm, however, in pointing out to him your personal concern over this missing American. The Sullivan case has not received much media attention of late. However, with the arrest of the six suspects in the murder of the nuns, the arrest of two suspects in the murder of AIFLD representatives, and the return of Father Bourgeois, the Sullivan case is our only major unsolved mystery involving Americans in El Salvador. Congresswoman Roukema, in a letter to you dated May 13, 1981, has also asked that you express your concern to the Duarte Government for the welfare and whereabouts of Mr. Sullivan.

RECOMMENDATION: That you send the attached personal message to President Duarte thanking him for his Government's efforts on behalf of Mr. Sullivan. The message will also serve to show your concern in the case and, remind President Duarte that no trace of Mr. Sullivan has been found since he

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disappeared from his hotel in San Salvador more than four months ago. I also recommend that following your message to President Duarte you sign the attached letter of concern to Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan.

Attachment:
1. Telegram to San Salvador.
2. Letter to Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan.

CA/OCS/EMR-RMWinge-jb
5/20/81 x25225

CA/OCS-LPGoelz
ARA/CEN-MBarry

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CA:OCS:EMR:EEMARTINEZ:JB
5/21/81 X25225
S:AMHAIG

CA:OCS:LPGOELZ
ARA:CEN:MBARRY

CA:OCS:EMR:RMWINGE
CA:DCASENCIO

IMMEDIATE SAN SALVADOR

AMH
EEM
LPG
RMW
MB
DCA

E.O. 12065: N/A

TAGS: CASC (SULLIVAN, JOHN J.)

SUBJECT: W/W JOHN J. SULLIVAN

1. EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO SEND FOLLOWING LETTER BY DIPLOMATIC NOTE TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY FROM SECRETARY HAIG TO PRESIDENT DUARTE:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

I WISH TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK YOUR EXCELLENCY FOR THE COOPERATION GIVEN BY YOUR GOVERNMENT IN OUR EFFORTS TO LOCATE MR. JOHN J. SULLIVAN, WHO DISAPPEARED WITHOUT TRACE IN YOUR COUNTRY ON DECEMBER 28, 1980. YOUR CONTINUED INTEREST IN SOLVING THIS MYSTERY IS APPRECIATED BY MR. SULLIVAN'S FAMILY AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.
SINCERELY, ALEXANDER M. HAIG, JR.444

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan:

I would like you to know that a personal message has been sent to President Duarte of El Salvador to express my concern as well as that of the United States Government for the welfare and whereabouts of your son, John.

Those of us in the Department of State who have been directly involved in assisting the Salvadoran Government in its efforts to determine what has happened to John join you in your prayers that this mystery will soon be solved and that your ordeal will soon be over.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Haig, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. John J. Sullivan, Sr.
263 Summit Avenue,
Bogota, New Jersey.

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[redacted]

MEMORANDUM TO: CA - Ambassador Diego C. Asencio

FROM: CA/OCS - Louis P. Goelz

SUBJECT: The Disappearance of John J. Sullivan in El Salvador

BACKGROUND

You will be called today at 2:00 p.m. by the Sullivan family. The nature of the call is unknown to us. However, following are possible reasons for call:

1. Sullivan family may ask that someone from Embassy travel to Guazapa region to interview source who claims she saw a man fitting Sullivan's description in the company of guerrillas. (Tab A). On April 28, Embassy further reported that Defense Minister Garcia sent soldiers to question the source, however, source was unwilling to discuss matter further out of fear of leftist reprisal. (Tab B). In Martinez/Lasbury telecon of 5/14, Ms. Lasbury was asked about possibility of person not connected with Embassy or Salvadoran Government interviewing source. However, Ms. Lasbury said Guazapa area is extremely dangerous because of the fighting. In Martinez/Lasbury telcon of 5/15, Ms. Lasbury reported that she had again contacted the source's brother yesterday and he said his sister is afraid and does not want to discuss the sighting. Ms. Lasbury added that she asked the Security Officer whether she could travel in an unmarked car to interview the source, but her request was denied.

2. Mr. Sullivan may have decided to travel to El Salvador and family is calling for our assistance in arranging meeting with President Duarte. Donna Igoe asked Mr. Martinez about this possibility after my meeting with Sullivan family on May 5, and Ms. Lasbury is looking into this possibility.

3. May ask if Mr. Ricardo Sol Meza who is suspected of involvement in the deaths of two U.S. citizen labor people has been questioned about disappearance of Mr. Sullivan. Although we understand that Mr. Sol Meza is still detained, Embassy has not requested that he be interviewed re Sullivan. The same applies to the six persons under detention who are suspects in the deaths of the 3 nuns and a lay person.

4. Ask for assistance in contacting the Rev. Roy Bourgeois, who recently returned to U.S. from El Salvador.

[redacted]

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Dear Mr. Hastings

As promised, enclosed are the letters received in response to our letter. Three responses were phone calls - all promising to try to find out what they can.

Of the other letters sent out, three were returned, but three did turn up at my sister's home. Of the others received about three letters from missionaries in Salvador.

This may be a rather simple thought but ... could the Secretary put in bitter the questions they would have asked the Ambassador at the hearing? Give that list to the Brothers and see if he can get responses. Also, as mentioned, Pat Holmes said Mr Somers might be available.

Thanks for all your kind help and patience.

P.S. Would you please send a copy of the letter to Mr. Ward

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BEMIS COMPANY, INC.

800 NORTHSTAR CENTER
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOT
CABLE ADDRESS: BEMISGE
TELEPHONE: (612) 340-60
TELEX: 29-0141

May 20, 1981

Mr. John J. Sullivan, Sr.
263 Summit Avenue
Bogota, New Jersey 07603

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

We have forwarded your letter seeking information on the disappearance of your son to our associates in El Salvador and requested that they get in touch with you if they can be of any assistance.

We wish you success in your search for information.

Sincerely,

E. S. McBride

Edwin S. McBride
Vice President, Operations

ESM/ag

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This is recycled paper

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DOW CHEMICAL LATIN AMERICA

P.O. BOX 340400
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA 33134 U.S.A.

May 18, 1981

Mr. John J. Sullivan, Sr.
263 Summit Avenue
Bogota, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

This will acknowledge your letter of April 24 with the distressing account of your son's disappearance. I can most certainly appreciate your dismay, and sympathize with you and your family.

We will do everything we can for you but, unfortunately, our resources in El Salvador are very limited. We have no subsidiary company or office in San Salvador, and only maintain a few resident detailmen because of our pharmaceuticals business there. Neither do we have travelers into that country, upon whom we could call to secure information on your son.

I will pursue this matter further with my colleagues and, if anything can be determined, we will be in touch with you immediately. In the meantime, I would be personally interested to know if you do receive word from your son. Let us hope and pray that you hear encouraging news soon.

Sincerely,

DOW CHEMICAL LATIN AMERICA

E. C. Falla
President

SWC

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SEARS, ROEBUCK AND CO.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

THOMAS B. SWEENEY Vice President, International Group

May 28, 1981

Mr. John J. Sullivan, Sr.
263 Summit Avenue
Bogota, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

Your letter of April 24 to the President of Sears, Roebuck and Co. in regard to the disappearance of your son, John, in San Salvador was referred to me as I am responsible for Sears International activities.

We are terribly sorry to learn of the disappearance of your son, John. We have contacted appropriate Latin American Sears personnel to determine if they are aware of any information about him. Please be assured that in the event that we obtain information that might be useful or informative to you, we will contact you immediately.

Sincerely,

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PITTSBURGH-DES MOINES CORPORATION
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA 15225

WILFRED JONES
PRESIDENT

May 19, 1981

Mr. John J. Sullivan, Sr.
263 Summit Avenue
Bogota, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

I have your letter regarding the disappearance of your son in El Salvador. We closed down our office there more than a year ago, but our base operation in Guatemala maintains sporadic contact. I have instructed our general manager in Guatemala to find out anything he can.

Please accept our regrets under your difficult circumstances.

Sincerely,

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Ralston Purina Company

Office of the Division Vice President

May 22, 1981

Mr. John J. Sullivan, Sr.
263 Summit Avenue
Bogota, New Jersey 07601

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

We do not have operations or personnel in El Salvador, so I am afraid we are unable to offer you any help in the search for your son.

We are indeed sympathetic to your situation, and we do hope you will have success in your search.

Sincerely

George H. Kyd
Division Vice President and Director
Public Relations

GHK/lmw

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Checkerboard Square
St. Louis, Missouri 63188

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INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH CORPORATION
320 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

JOHN HANWAY II
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

May 20, 1981

Mr. John J. Sullivan
263 Summit Avenue
Bogota, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

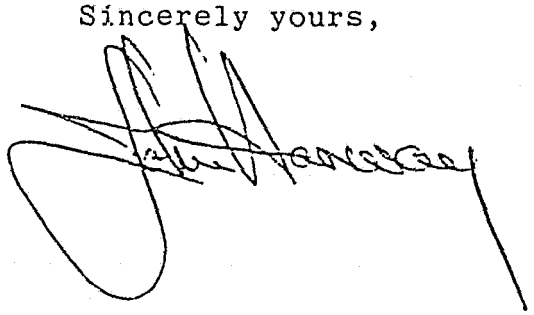
We received your letter of April 24, postmarked May 16, in regard to the disappearance of your son, John J. Sullivan, Jr., in El Salvador, and appreciate the anguish that you and members of your family must feel.

I assume you have tried to have your son located by directing appropriate inquiries through the United States Government and that you are continuing to pursue that course.

As you appreciate, ITT as a corporation can take no action in regard to such a problem. However, we shall inform our personnel and ask them to report on any information of possible significance. Should we hear anything at all in regard to your son or the circumstances of his disappearance, we shall inform you promptly.

On behalf of ITT, I want to extend our sympathies and assure you that we will pass on any information that comes to our attention.

Sincerely yours,



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KIMBERLY-CLARK CORPORATION

June 2, 1981

Mr. John J. Sullivan, Sr.
263 Summit Avenue
Bogota, New Jersey 07603

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

Your letter to the President of Kimberly-Clark was received on May 26, 1981, and has been referred to me for response. In providing security for our employees in El Salvador I have traveled extensively in that country for the last four years and have established reliable contacts. I was aware of your son's disappearance and can assure you any information that comes to our attention regarding his whereabouts, no matter how insignificant it seems, will be relayed to you. I communicate weekly and sometimes daily with our people in El Salvador and I will be advising them of your request.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to you and your family and I sincerely hope good news will be forthcoming in the near future. I realize the U.S. State Department is also actively involved in trying to locate your son and I am sure they are doing everything they can in this regard. The professional diplomats at the embassy in El Salvador are some of the best and I know they are sincere in their efforts.

If you think there is anything else I might be able to do for you please contact me personally.

Yours very truly,

Dennis A. Noggle

Dennis A. Noggle, CPP
Corporate Security Director

DAN/llg
cc: Mr. Robert Ernest
President

0314597030

PHONE (414) 721-2000

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Maidenform, inc.

154 Avenue E, Bayonne, New Jersey 07002 • (201) 436-9200 • Cable: Maibra

May 29, 1981

Mr. John J. Sullivan, Sr.
263 Summit Avenue
Bogota, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

Your letter of April 24 was directed to my attention in my capacity as Vice President-International Licensing. We do have a licensee operating in El Salvador.

Please be advised that I was in contact with our former president of the licensed company, now a resident in Miami, and was informed that he was in the hotel during that interval when your son had checked in. His disappearnce caused some stir and my contact was rather concerned, fearing for his own safety. However, despite having made numerous inquiries, at the time, he was unable to obtain a "clue".

I regret that I cannot provide you with any more encouraging informatic to relieve you of this sorry affair. I trust that you are more successful in your efforts to locate your son.

Very truly yours,

MAIDENFORM, INC.

Jerome M. Pruden

JMP:kr

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CONTRACTORS
ENGINEERS
DEVELOPERS

MORRISON-KNUDSEN COMPANY, INC.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE
ONE MORRISON-KNUDSEN PLAZA
P.O. BOX 7808 / BOISE, IDAHO 83729 / U.S.A.
PHONE (208) 345-5000 / TELEX 368439

W. H. McMURREN
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

May 29, 1981

Mr. John J. Sullivan, Sr.
263 Summit Avenue
Bogota, New Jersey 07603

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

We are in receipt of your April 24, 1981 letter requesting assistance in developing information about the disappearance of your son, John.

On May 26, 1981, Mr. W. C. Perkins, Vice President of the Latin American Division of Morrison-Knudsen International, explained our current business situation in El Salvador to your daughter, Mrs. Donna Igoe, and reviewed with her the possibilities of Morrison-Knudsen being of meaningful assistance. As discussed with Mrs. Igoe, we are willing to contact our business associates in El Salvador, as well as other companies in our industry that have current or recent operations in El Salvador.

We hope that this effort will prove to be productive, and we most sincerely hope that your son will be returned to you in the very near future.

Sincerely,

W. H. McMurren.

WHM:PA

cc - W. C. Perkins w/copy ltr. 4/24/81

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GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION

June 1, 1981

Mr. John J. Sullivan, Sr.
263 Summit Avenue
Bogota, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

This refers to your letter dated April 24, 1981 in which you asked if General Motors might be able to provide information about your son, John J. Sullivan, Jr., who disappeared while working as a free lance journalist in El Salvador.

At the outset, may we express our deepest sympathy to you and your family. We realize fully these are very difficult and dark days for all of you.

While General Motors sells its products in El Salvador through independent local dealers, we do not have any offices in that country. We sincerely regret, therefore, there is no way in which GM might be able to provide information about your son or otherwise be of assistance.

While we are truly sorry we are unable to offer any help, we would like to express our heartfelt hope that your efforts to obtain information about your son will soon be successful, and the long period of anguish you have suffered will end.

Sincerely,

Eric Mittelstadt

Eric Mittelstadt
Executive Assistant to Vice
President and Group Executive,
Overseas Group

General Motors Building 3044 West Grand Boulevard Detroit, Michigan 48202

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THE PILLSBURY COMPANY
608 SECOND AVENUE SOUTH
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55402

EDWARD F. McDONNELL
GROUP VICE PRESIDENT
PILLSBURY INTERNATIONAL

612/330-8961

May 27, 1981

Mr. & Mrs. John J. Sullivan, Sr.
263 Summit Avenue
Bogata, New Jersey 07603

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Sullivan:

On behalf of The Pillsbury Company, please let me assure you we will do everything we can to assist in the effort to help locate your son, John.

We do have business relationships throughout Central America and specifically in San Salvador. I have today asked the director of our business activities for that area to contact our local partners to see what they can do.

As an aside, one of our partners in San Salvador was kidnapped by the terrorist element and released unharmed. We hope and pray that John's fate will be the same.

Once again, please be assured we will do everything humanly possible on your behalf.

Sincerely,

E. F. McDonnell

Edward F. McDonnell

EFM:pjj

cc: Win Wallin, President
Gerry O'Conner, Regional Manager

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MAX FACTOR [redacted]

A NORTON SIMON INC COMPANY

Max Factor & Co.
1655 North McCadden Place
Hollywood, California 90028
(213) 462-6131

May 21, 1981

Mr. John J. Sullivan, Sr.
263 Summit Avenue
Bogota, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

Your letter of April 24 has been referred to me for response. I sincerely sympathize with your family's plight. Next week, I am meeting with our General Manager from El Salvador and I will be more than glad to discuss your request with him.

I certainly hope that everything will turn out alright. Obviously, if we hear or find out anything, we will contact you immediately.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

MAX FACTOR & CO.

Charles H. Brassard
Vice President - International
Latin America/Caribbean

CHB:co

[redacted]

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PVO International Inc.

World Trade Center
San Francisco, California 94111
Cable Address "PAVEO"
Telephone 415/362-0990

May 19, 1981

Mr. John J. Sullivan, Sr.
263 Summit Avenue
Bogota, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

We regret that our company does not have any operations in Central America and, hence, are not in a position to assist you in locating your son, John.

Through the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, I believe you could contact the American Chamber of Commerce in San Salvador and they in turn could advise you the names of companies that have branches or subsidiaries there.

We do hope that your search for your son proves successful.

Sincerely,

C. D. Hultberg
Chief Operating Officer

CDH/s

0914539730

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NELLO L. TEER COMPANY
P. O. BOX 1131 DURHAM, N. C. U. S. A. 27702

contractors

May 18, 1981

Mr. John J. Sullivan, Sr.
263 Summit Avenue
Bogota, New Jersey 07603

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

We are forwarding your letter of April 24, 1981 to our representatives in San Salvador and trust that in some way they may be able to assist in the location of your son.

Sincerely,

NELLO L. TEER COMPANY

By: Nello L. Teer, Jr.
President

NLTjr/lk

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THE PROCTER & GAMBLE COMPANY

PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

P. O. BOX 599 CINCINNATI, OHIO 45201

May 27, 1981

Mr. John J. Sullivan, Sr.
263 Summit Avenue
Bogota, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

We were very sorry to hear of your plight concerning the disappearance of your son, John, in El Salvador. Although we would like to be of service in your efforts to locate him, we will be unable to help you. Our Company has had no operations or offices in El Salvador for nearly ten years. While some of our products may be available there, our business is done on an export basis.

Again, we are sorry we can't help you. We truly hope your search happily concludes with the location of your son.

Sincerely,

L. L. Ulrey

LLU/hmb

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INTER•CONTINENTAL HOTELS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE
PAN AM BUILDING NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10017 TELEPHONE 880-1000

May 19, 1981

Mr. John J. Sullivan
263 Summit Avenue
Bogota, N.J.

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

I am replying to your letter of April 24, which only arrived this date.

Regrettably, we have no connections nor any business offices in San Salvador, and, therefore, cannot help you in determining the whereabouts of your son. If we had been established in that country, you could rest assured we would have made every effort to obtain information on him.

I do hope that you are able to find John in the near future and that he will be back with you again soon.

Sincerely,

James A. Hynes
Vice President
Personnel Resources

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